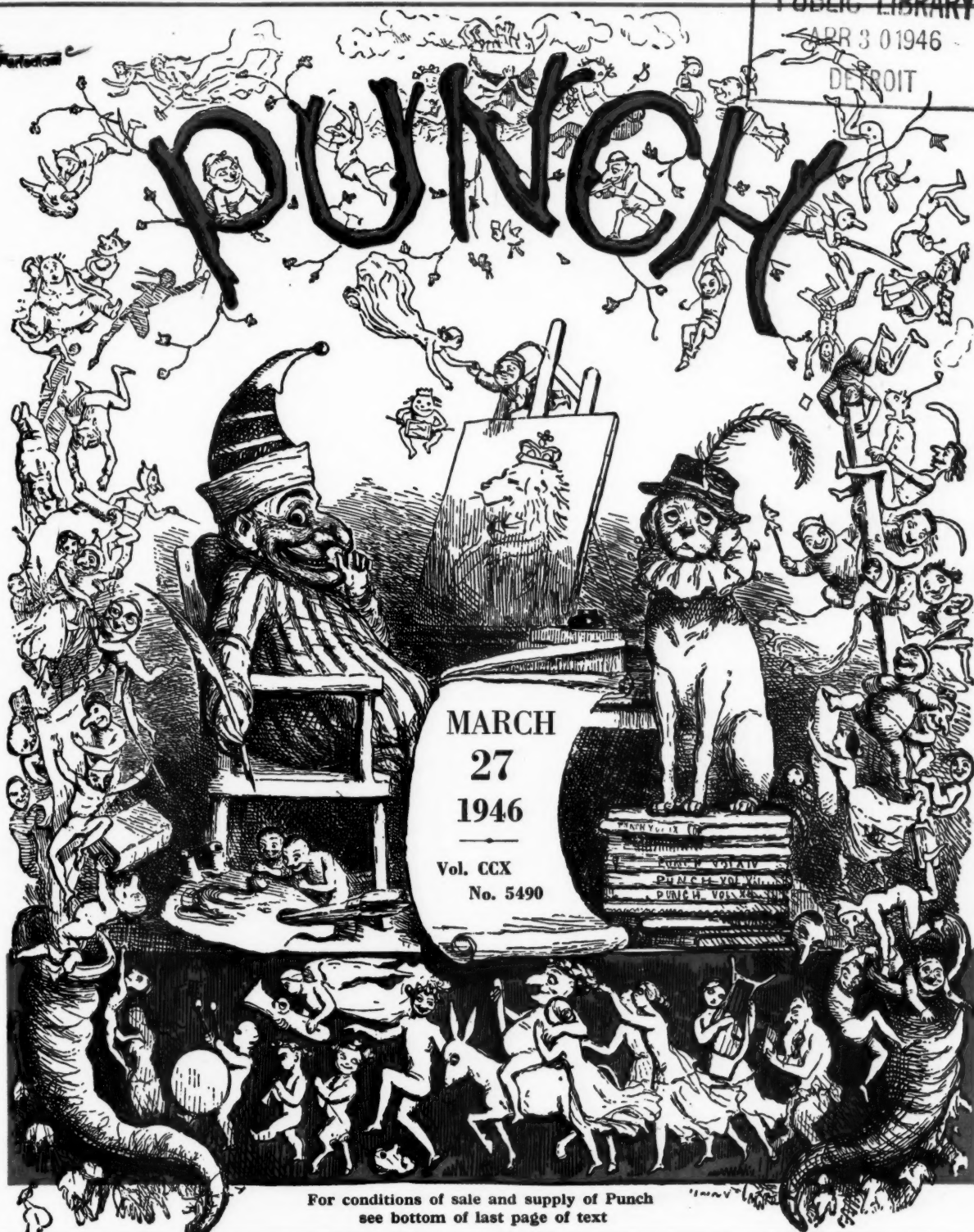


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And frightened Miss Muffet away."

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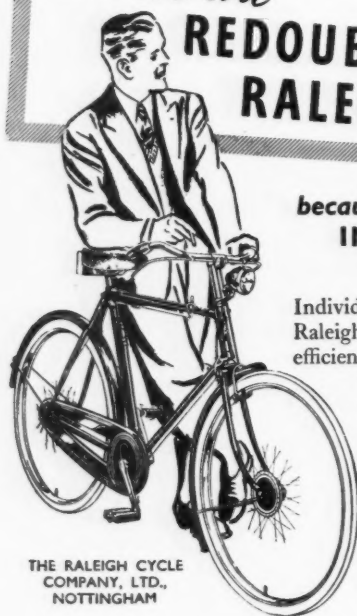
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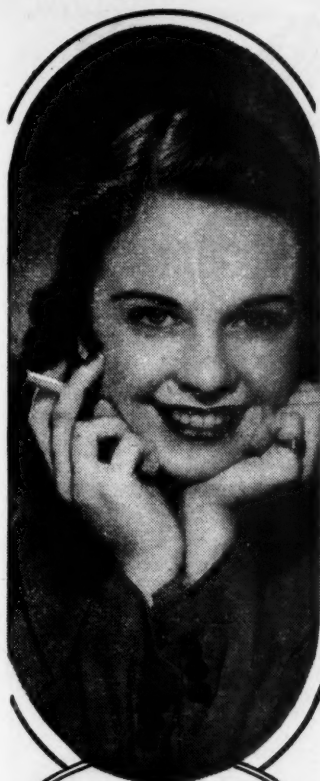


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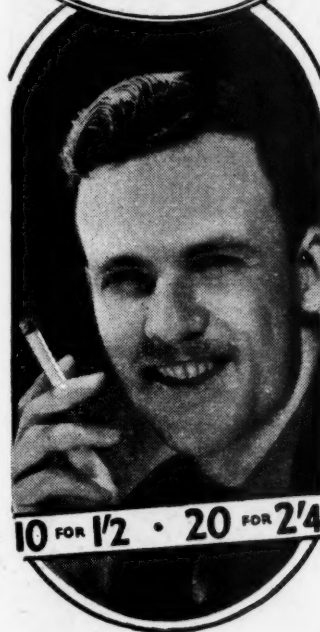
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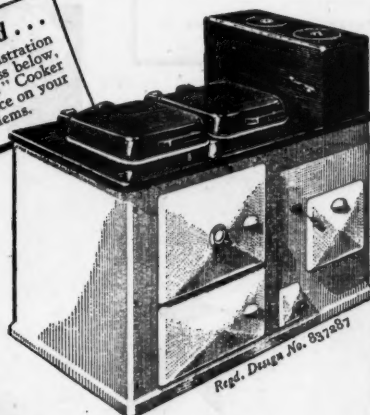
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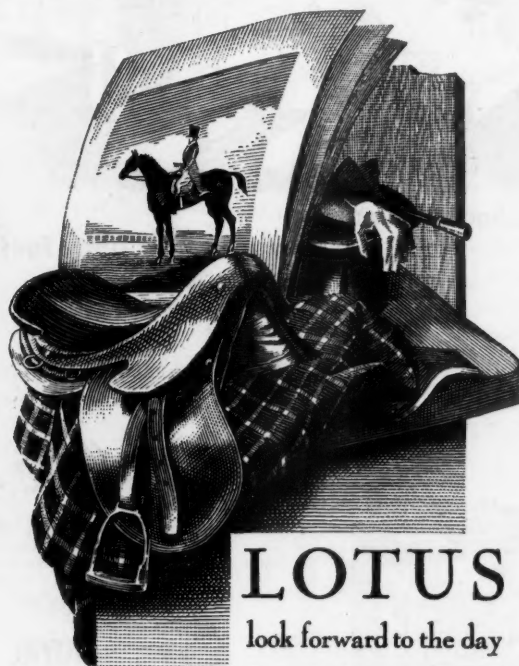
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A NOBLE SCOTCH—Gentle as a lamb

OA5c



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BETTER COFFEE
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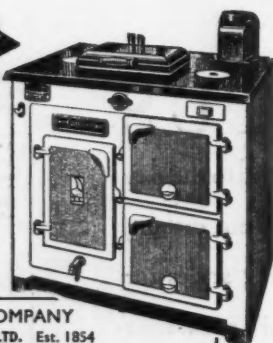
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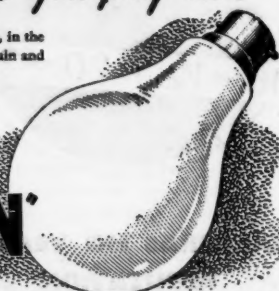
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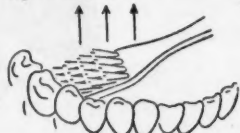
THE
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How to brush your teeth

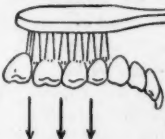
(No. 3 OF A SERIES. Cut it out and keep it.)

Food caught in cracks and crevices is the usual cause of decay. Microbes are bred which destroy protective enamel. Bad teeth often cause ill-health. Correct brushing is your best protection.

LOWER BACK TEETH. Hold brush handle so that it projects beneath the nose. Use brisk "pull up" strokes as shown by arrows. Practice makes it easy. 6 strokes.



UPPER BACK TEETH. Never brush "backwards and forwards" (along the line of the jaw-bone). Place bristles lightly on gum just above tooth line — twist the



wrist and sweep bristles "downwards" over teeth as shown by arrows.

TWIST THE WRIST

When brushing lower teeth twist the wrist and sweep bristles "upwards." For upper teeth twist the wrist and sweep bristles "downwards." Arrows show track bristles should follow.

ALWAYS — Use an unwetted toothbrush. Clean your teeth last thing at night and after breakfast. Keep at least two toothbrushes — use them alternately. Visit your dentist regularly.



USE YOUR Wisdom WISELY

MADE BY ADDIS LTD., MAKERS OF THE FIRST TOOTHBRUSH IN 1780



Quicken the patient's metabolism

and you quicken recovery

METABOLISM is the scientific name for the process constantly going on in our bodies: the breakdown of food during digestion and the absorption of the nutrients needed to replace energy.

During illness this is slowed down. And it must be speeded up before the patient can get on the road to recovery.

Food is what is needed to quicken metabolism, but often the patient has no desire for food. Doctors therefore recommend light, easily digested soups and meat extracts.

Tests at a famous institute have shown that, of these, Brand's Essence is outstandingly successful in raising metabolism.

Besides, Brand's Essence is tempting. A few spoonfuls immediately raise the metabolic rate, and soon appetite begins to return. Brand's Essence costs 3/-.



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He thought he was completely protected but

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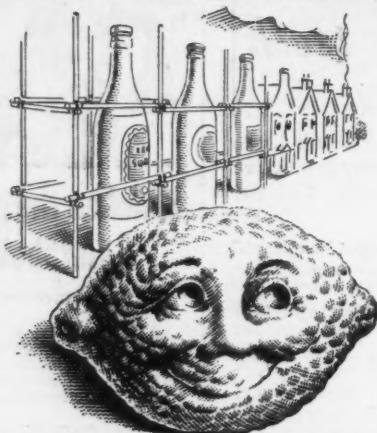
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IDRIS

THE QUALITY SOFT DRINK

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TABLE WATERS THROUGH FIVE SUCCESSIVE REIGNS



**What's he
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to worry
about?**

HE EATS three meals a day but he doesn't have to plan them and cook them, let alone find them! Food is a problem, but women are finding that by adding Benger's to suppers, for instance, they make sure of a satisfying foundation of nourishment. Benger's is by far the most nourishing way of taking milk because, added to the food value of the milk is the rich nutriment of Benger's itself. And Benger's helps your digestion to extract the fullest benefit from whatever you eat. Have a cup of Benger's tonight . . . Benger's has a delicious flavour.

Why Benger's Food is so good for you

People don't realise that milk is tough work for the digestion last thing at night. Active enzymes in Benger's Food break up these curds, partially pre-digest the milk so that you absorb the full nutriment of the milk without digestive strain. Benger's, today, is as easy to make as a cup of cocoa. At chemists and grocers, from 1/9 a tin.



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Milk both make
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Try it!

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The Men's Shoe Department at Simpsons is not only distinguished for its fine footwear — hand-lasted, well-styled and long-wearing — but endless care and skill is devoted to the actual fitting of the shoes.

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Unexcelled for Tea-time Sandwiches!



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PUNCH

OR

THE LONDON CHARIVARI



Vol. CCX No. 5490

March 27 1946

Charivaria

THERE was a scene on a London railway station recently. Apparently a guard refused to let his train start unless room was made for him in the guard's van.

At a recent race-meeting several bank-notes were blown out of a bookmaker's hand, but they were all handed back to him. They generally are, whatever the weather.

Unfortunate Incident in the Sporting World

"JINNAH STICKS TO HIS GUN"

Indian paper.



A man charged with breaking the glass in a telephone kiosk said he lost his temper because he found he hadn't any coppers. A couple soon arrived.

Archæologists are in doubt about a strangely shaped vase found in an Egyptian tomb. One theory is that it was a bridge prize.

A motorist says that on a cold morning he thinks longingly of those tropical countries where a few determined cranks can start a revolution.

Calm and Collected

"For refusing to disperse, one person was arrested at Machi Mani today."—*Indian paper.*



A correspondent in a Sunday paper urges that Mr. Churchill should be recognized as a great painter. The first step is to have one of his pictures successfully rejected by the Royal Academy.

"Bradford played with spit, but they were always struggling, and never looked impressive."—*Sunday paper.*
Spit's no good without polish.

"Some of the music broadcast nowadays is positively frightening," says a critic. Is this the reason why ears generally go about in pairs?

An indignant animal-lover suggests that it would do steeplechase jockeys good to go over the worst of the jumps instead of the horses. It is only fair to add that those who have done so have found that it hasn't.

The Brains Trust have expressed their disbelief in astrology. In retaliation an astrologer says he won't send them any lists of questions to be submitted in forthcoming weeks.

Nearly one thousand cases of chewing gum were manufactured in the United States last year. And think of the turnover.



An instructor states that a girl can be taught to spin round on her toes thirty-eight times without falling over. This should be good training for women who cook in the kitchenettes of small flats.

Crescendo

"The students advised the Dean to ask the Rector to request the Governor to order the police to allow them to pass through the streets."—*Egyptian paper.*

An Englishman detained by the Spanish authorities and said to have entered the country from France gave his name as Arthur Smith. Art, evidently, knows no frontiers.

An Old Story

IT is not from everyone that you will hear praises of the British Inn; of the British Inn that is to be found in smaller rustic towns. But I met a stranger once from overseas (and I met him in an inn) who said that he loved them all and could never visit them often enough. It was the magic and the mystery of them, he said, that appealed to him, and he gave me a description of what he called the Purple Alligator at Harton on the Lye. I cannot but think that the name he gave to this hostelry was a fictitious one, and that many things which he told me about it were exaggerated, or even products of his own eccentric mind.

He said that he stopped his motor-car some ten years ago before the entrance of the Purple Alligator, because he was so much delighted by the architecture. The upper part of the building, he said, was sham Tudor, but the effect of this, he said, was largely offset by the ground floor, which was fronted with glazed tiles of a deep maroon colour, thus bridging the gulf of the years.

He went inside and was at once embarrassed by a sense of extreme loneliness. It was not one of those bars that are set apart for drinking in this island, and as he stood in the narrow passage which was certainly two hundred years older than the façade, he had the guilty feeling of one who trespasses on forbidden ground. There was silence in the inn. Not a whisper. Not the movement of a mouse. He persevered, however, and, passing inward, found a door half-glazed on which were written the words "COFFEE ROOM." He turned the handle of the door to right and left several times until at last it yielded, and then, stepping forward, he fell down upon his knees. This was because the room was dark and there was a deep step on the further side of the door. But the humble attitude that he had assumed was not, he said, unsuitable to the place, for at the further end he perceived a sort of shrine, a dais on which stood a larger number of coffee pots than he had ever supposed to exist outside a wholesale silversmith's. There was also on this same place a great number of bottles containing red or brown liquids labelled with every letter of the alphabet from A to Z whose purpose he could not surmise, and above this altar, as he continued rather indecorously to call it, hung a picture entitled "The Soul's Awakening." It was flanked on one side by a framed declaration that a person whom he supposed to be his host belonged to the Royal and Antiquated Order of Wyverns, and on the other side by a very dark painting heavily framed in gold, which either represented two dead birds and a live dog, or else the leading-in of the winner at a local race-meeting about ninety years ago—he was inclined to think the latter.

There was an unlit fire in the grate and on the mantelpiece a glass case imprisoning a stuffed otter which had lost (he thought posthumously) two legs and one eye. The other eye, he said, followed him malevolently as he groped about the room. His vision becoming now more accustomed to the darkness, he perceived several tables covered with deeply stained cloths, and another sideboard on which were thirty-two pewter tankards and a soup-tureen. Over these were suspended a wedding group of the early eighties and a portrait of King Edward VII looking comparatively fit and well.

By this time his sense of isolation had become nearly insupportable, and seeing a rope hanging from the ceiling near the fire he pulled it. No sound came, nor did he know where to put the severed rope which now dangled

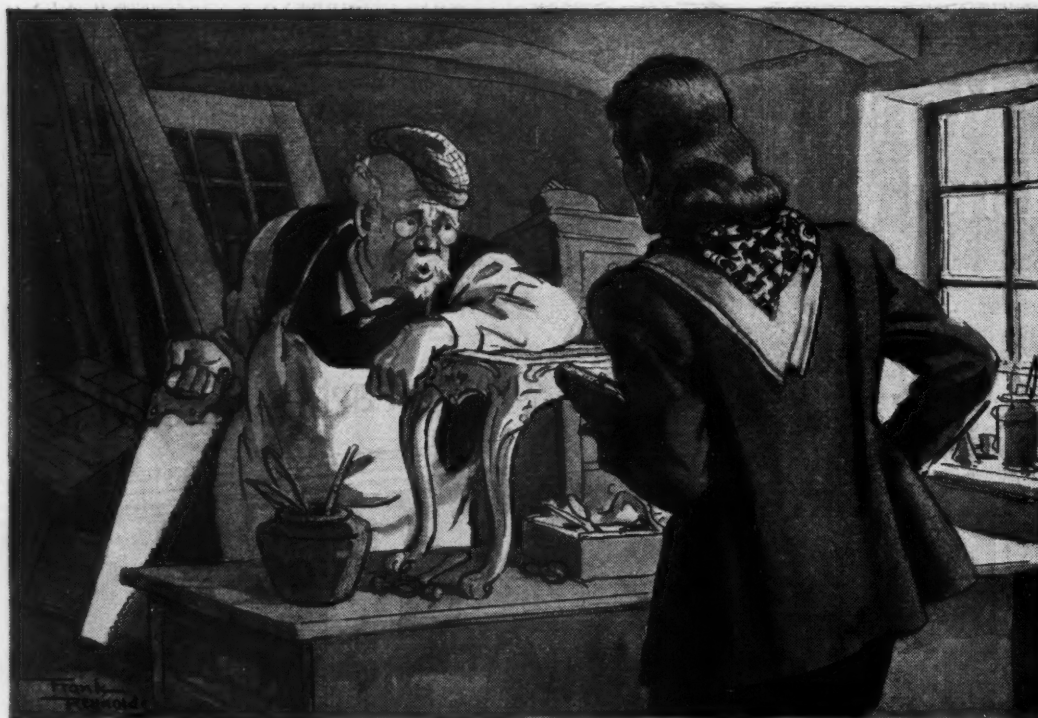
idly from his hand. He went back into the passage and found the foot of a staircase. Down this was stumbling a stout middle-aged man half-aroused from sleep, on whose countenance was stamped a look of incredible malignity.

Rightly guessing that this was Boniface, he made inquiries about his reception for the night. "I shall not weary you," said the stranger, "with the whole story of my adventures, nor describe in detail how a terrible cry echoing through the labyrinths of that lonely edifice, which I interpreted as the word 'Mabel,' produced an elderly female who made me write my autobiography in a book and showed me a small bedroom, looking out on to the yard, whose walls were decorated with texts explaining that whatever I did the eye of the Creator was upon me. I shall not say how I backed my car into the gloom of what was fancifully described as a garage, avoiding the agricultural implements under the guidance of a one-time ostler, who helped me with cries of 'Hup!' 'Whoa there!' 'Steady!' and other encouraging sounds. I should like to tell you of the dinner that I endured that night, but there are some episodes that surpass the powers of human description. Suffice it to say that there was only one other guest, who spoke but little and, when he did, gave me the impression of a rather unfriendly Kalmack addressing a possibly hostile Kurd. There was, I remember, some mutton. It was hardly cooked. My fellow banqueter described it as 'a bit rare.' Myself, I should have gone further; I should have called it unique. Whatever eccentricity it possessed he overcame in masterly manner. He took four or five of the bottles which I have described above and poured large doses from them in turn over the recalcitrant material. By thus breaking down its resistance he consumed what seemed to me a remarkable quantity of the fabric. We were served by a sad-looking waiter, younger, I think, than the interior, but certainly senior to the exterior of the inn. I should like to say that he brought us drink which redeemed by its excellence the sombre and indestructible nature of the food. But it would be more truthful to say simply that he brought us warm beer.

"I am leading you," he continued, "as rapidly as I can, to what may be called the central core of the mystery. When we had finished or abandoned our adventures with the meal itself I asked for coffee. There, then, in that room, the door of which was decorated with the label of which I have told you—that room the sideboard of which was adorned with so many pots and flagons, dating from I know not how many hundred years ago, created by cunning artificers for the sole purpose of containing the decoction of the Arabian berry, I had set before me a small cup of some kind of tepid ditch-water not readily distinguishable in taste or temperature from the liquid that was brought to my bedroom to wash in, or that flowed with difficulty from the bathroom tap. Of my night's rest on a mattress like a dromedary's hump I will not speak. I did not wake at cock-crow, for at cock-crow I was still awake. My bedroom, as I mentioned, overlooked the backyard, and I think the cock was stationed on my motor-car. I am a man who loves strange excitements and deeds of hardihood. I am seldom daunted, and there can never be enough Purple Alligators for me. But all men are not like me, and unless there is some change it will be a long time before Harton on the Lye can call itself the Mecca, or even the Mocha, of visitors from foreign lands." EVOE.



COME TO BEAUTIFUL BRITAIN!



"You can't expect me to perform the impossible, lady—I haven't got the equipment."

For Flute-Lovers Only

SOME faces go very well at the end of a flute. They seem to grow out of it in a beautiful and harmonious way. Others look terribly wrong, like overgrown root vegetables in the throes of spiritual torment. Mine happened to be in the former class. I was very fond of my flute, and when I was young I used to practise it in my bedroom, propping my Tutor against the wash-hand-stand. My parents told me I could choose between practising in my bedroom and practising downstairs inside a big canvas bag they had had constructed, which tied round my waist and was pretty well sound-proof. It was always warmer downstairs, but I had to stay in my room because there was nothing to prop my Tutor against inside the bag.

The other day I came on my flute in a trunk full of purple socks. There it was, long and holey and covered with tarnished silver soup-spoons upside down in different sizes. I gathered my

family round me. It was an historic moment, and I thought it might be culturally helpful to them.

"I don't think I ever told you I played the flute," I said. Lifting my old friend caressingly to my lips I spat primly in the manner which had been so graphically recommended in Para. 3 of Page 1 of m' Tutor. Nothing happened beyond the sort of noise to which plumbers grow quickly callous.

"Well?" they asked.

"Good gracious," I said, "how little you know about the flute! The barrel has to be well warmed up."

I redoubled my efforts, changing the expectoral focus slightly in case that would help.

"It may take some little time for the instrument to become live," I said, guardedly. "You must have noticed orchestras doing this kind of thing."

"It's certainly man's work," they said.

I depressed all the soup-spoons

in turn, but in turn they depressed me.

"And wet," they added. It was true there was a damp patch spreading on the floor where I had overshot the mark. That is admittedly one of the disadvantages of hydraulic instruments.

"There's probably an ants'-nest in the middle," they said.

I wished m' Tutor had turned up too. It was just some master-trick I had forgotten. I was beginning to feel as dry as an angry cobra.

"Thirty years is a long time," I wheezed. "Anything may have happened to it."

"It's very disappointing," they said coldly.

"Very," I agreed. "I remember so well playing the solo in the school band. How the fellows clapped!"

When I was alone again, which I soon was, I picked up the telephone and asked for a respectable music-shop.

"Hello?"

"Have you a good flute-tutor?"

"Hev we wot?"

"Have you got any sort of flute-tutor?"

"Could yew spell it?"

"Yes, T-O-O-T-F-L-U-T-O-R."

"Oh, wot yew mean is a flewit-tootor. Oh, no, we hev'n't seen those for years."

"Have you anything on the flewit?"

"No, nothing at all on the flewit."

My dear old flewit. I tucked it under my arm and wandered down the field for a slice of fresh air. I came to a stump under a hedge and there I sat down. Conditions for flaunting seemed favourable. I noticed a small salt-spoon underneath that had escaped me, and taking up a Pan-like stance I threw it into gear. To my astonishment two notes were instantly discharged. They were rather unusual notes, and circled the field once or twice before climbing away to the east. Sad, but quite *tutti-flutti*, if you know what I mean. I went on blowing them for some time, until suddenly I felt sick and tired of the whole business. To be any fun a flute must produce lots of noise and lots of different kinds of noises. I shoved the wretched thing in my pocket and started home. At the stile a little old couple in green mackintoshes were standing clawing each other excitedly.

"Did you hear it, sir?" demanded the little old man.

"Hear what?" I asked.

"The hoopoe. The mating-call!" squeaked the little old lady.

"Most exciting," cried the man. "So rare!"

"Sure it was a hoopoe?" I asked.

"Of course. Our garden in China was alive with them."

"We couldn't mistake a hoopoe. That strident, harsh, unmusical quality!"

"That settles it," I said.

"You didn't see anything?" squeaked the little old lady.

"I did just see something flash through the undergrowth."

"No?"

"It seemed to be wearing an evening shirt with a kind of lace stomacher and a tartan rug over its shoulders. Of course I only saw it for a moment."

"Naturally, naturally," they both squeaked together, doing a little dance in the lane. "Oh, how thrilling!"

"You'll be writing to *The Times* newspaper?" I said.

"Of course we shall."

Does anybody want to buy a flewit? (Adv't.). ERIC.

The Cox Who Put On Weight

I WOULD a tale unfold
About a boat-race cox
In blazer blue—'twas one of two—
Eke cap and tie and socks.

Each trick of wind and tide,
Each eddy's habitat
He knew full well, but sad to tell
He started getting fat.

The President and coach
And many an aged "blue"
Debated long on what was wrong,
Each confident he knew.

Two minions of massage
To pummel and to knead
His torso came, but all the same
He flourished like a weed.

He dripped in Turkish baths,
All laughter he eschewed;
Mahatma-like he went on strike
Against his daily food.

They filled him up with drugs
Of nauseating taste,
Yet none of use to help reduce
His girth about the waist.

Till one day there appeared
With autographic book
A lovely girl, a perfect pearl,
Who gave him one long look.

He fell for her at once,
Began to peak and pine:
He steered his crew to victory too;
His weight was 7-9.

o o

Fire Up Aloft

THE unshaven man with a muffler and no teeth was the only other passenger on the upper deck. Unwisely I took the seat in front of him and he tapped me sharply on the shoulder before I could open my evening paper.

"Are you a human being, sir?" he asked. He sounded remarkably as if he were speaking through a mouthful of grit.

I did not answer. I was not going to become involved in any unpleasantness. Only last Christmas a lady in a trilby hat accused me on a District train of being in league with the Duke of Norfolk to revive the window tax,

and when I said I thought she must have made a mistake she struck me on the knee with a basket and proclaimed shrilly that I was employed at the British Museum, and would be better occupied down a pit. It always pays to be cautiously silent with strangers who strike up conversations on public vehicles.

"Ere," said the man, laying a bristly chin on my shoulder. "What about it?"

"What about what?" I said weakly, wishing desperately for more upper-deck passengers.

"Are you a human being, I said, are you?"

"Yes."

He got up and came to sit beside me.

"Then, 'ere," he said, and gave me a new box of matches.

"Thank you," I said, giving them back—"but I have some."

"You got to stand up for what's right," he said, seizing me by the forearm and jutting his jaw belligerently. "Do you stand up for what's right?"

"I do." It was obviously useless to try to make a sensible conversation of it.

"Then, 'ere." He again pressed the box into my hand.

"Thank you," I said.

"Fares, please, any more fares," said the conductor, who had mounted unnoticed from below.

"I'll pay my own," said the unshaven man, and glared at me defensively. "Fleet Street, mate."

"Trafalgar Square," I said.

"Two two's," said the conductor, and went down the stairs whistling.

It seemed contemptible to take the matches.

"Look," I said—"I don't want these."

He pushed my hand violently away. "Didn't ought to 'ave bought them," said the man.

"Then why did you?"

"Don't want nothing to do with them," said the man; lowering his voice to a rusty whisper he went on,

"They're after me!"

"The police?"

"Tcheaow!"

"Are they on the bus?"

"Tcheaow!"

"What are they after you for?"

"Going to give the story to the papers. Fleet Street. You'll see!"

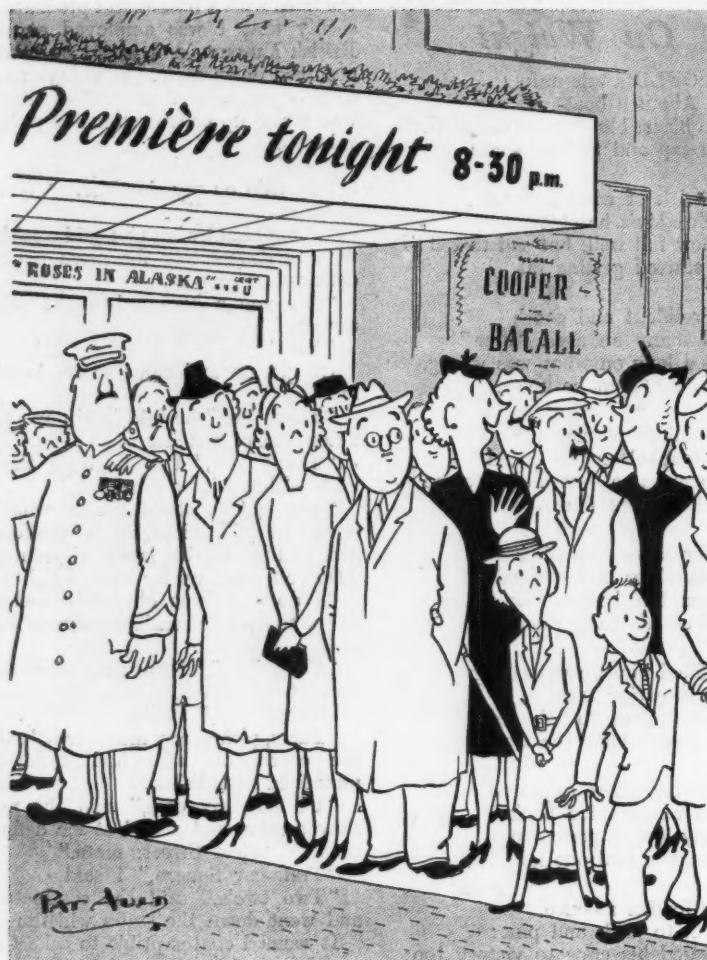
"Any particular paper?"

"I'm not telling," he snarled, "so you needn't ask. You've a right to use your 'ead and hands, ain't you?"

"Rather."

"Then I'm not guilty."

"What of?"



"I've ALWAYS wanted to see Mrs. Attlee."

"What they say."

"What do they say?"

"They say I done something I never, see? That's why I never ought to have bought them. Dangerous, isn't it?"

"What is?"

"Settin' light to buildings."

"It certainly is."

"I'm going to tell the papers."

"I should."

"And don't ask me what paper."

"I won't."

"Because I never done it, sir, as sure as you're a human being. Do you want to see justice done, or don't you?"

"We're coming to the *Daily Express* building on the right," I said evasively

—"or a little further up on the left—"

"Do you want to know what paper?"

"Well," I said—"I should like to read the story. But of course, if you—"

"Don't get too curious, sir," he said, rising and swaying threateningly over me—"you've got your matches, be satisfied with that."

"And I'm very grateful," I said, soothingly. "But I really don't feel I should—"

"Three-halfpence here, three-halfpence there," he said, backing to the stairs as the bus began to slow down—"what's money? I came straight past St. Paul's, didn't I?"

"Yes," I said, "you certainly—"

But he had disappeared down the companion-way.

The bus did not move off at once. There appeared to be some altercation going on down below. I heard the gritty voice say urgently, "He'll do it for you, mate, I tell you." Presently the conductor came up.

"What's the idea," he demanded, "keeping the poor bloke's matches?"

"Just a minute," I said—"I—"

"Come on, come on. I saw him lend 'em to you." He held out a large hand. Two lower-deck passengers had followed him up and were giving me scornful glances.

"Here you are," I said. I gave him the matches.

The other two passengers looked ugly for a minute, then slowly went down again.

"Some folks!" said the conductor witheringly, and ran down the stairs.

The only glimmer of satisfaction I got out of the whole business is that I now know what paper got the story. And so do you. J. B. B.

"FIFTY YEARS WITH PUNCH"

An exhibition of original drawings by the late Sir Bernard Partridge is now on view at the Fine Art Society, 148 New Bond Street, W.1. Many of Sir Bernard's most famous *Punch* cartoons are to be seen there.

Things Alone

XV

ONCE a question begged an answer

"Could you tell me what I mean?"

"I cannot," replied the answer,

"questions should be heard, not seen."

XVI

A circle said "I know a point which claims to be my centre, but as I'm closed I want to know however did it enter?"

XVII

A light switch said "Before I switch I'm never certain which is which, and not before I see the light am I convinced that I was right."

XVIII

A star once told another star he was afraid he'd gone too far. The other said quite cheerfully "You can't upset astronomy."

At the Pictures

CONFECTIONERY

As you read these words, the town probably offers one or two new films of reasonable importance; as I write them, there seems to be no strong argument against beginning with a piece of foolery that does not pretend to be anything more than pure entertainment. *The Harvey Girls* (Director: GEORGE SIDNEY) is a Technicolor confection stuffed with music, song, dance, emotionalism, comedy and other things known to be attractive to a large number of customers, and I have to admit that as a means of wasting time agreeably it is effective enough. What it would be without JUDY GARLAND, and without Technicolor (some of the colour scenes here are exceedingly well done and pleasing to the eye), I don't know; but that needn't worry us.

The scene is the old wild West (but the music of course is as new as they can get it) and the theme is the conflict between the Harvey restaurants, and particularly the Harvey restaurant waitresses, and the old-fashioned saloons with their drunks and fancy ladies. The Harvey Girls are represented as a kind of civilizing mission: they descend in a body on a town far sunk in vice, and in no time the hardened gamblers are eating out of their hands, the church is reopened, the shady judge is discomfited, and respectability is rampant. The plot is a good deal more twisted up than that, of course, but there you have the essence of it. However, an attractive thing about the picture is that on the whole the plot is not taken seriously. There are passages of pure musical comedy, or rather the cinema's characteristic modification of the musical-comedy convention. For example, there is an extraordinarily elaborate and (I think) effective sequence at the beginning, built round the arrival of a train. The amount of miscellaneous skill and intensive rehearsal that must

have gone into this is impressive to contemplate—and as sheer entertainment, I think, the result is worth it.

Don't run away with the idea that I said this was a Good Film, an appellation I like to keep (in my

more hope of intellectual and æsthetic profit. It is, after all, a French film, and it has what would appear to be a good subject, the life of Berlioz. But no; the second of the "Gaumont French films," which have been chosen for wide distribution in this country, is, I think, as unsatisfactory as the first (*Love Eternal*). As unsatisfactory, but not as characteristically un-French; for throughout this piece, absurd as some of it seems, there are passages, episodes, sequences that are completely Gallic in feeling. To take a trivial moment for example: the ludicrous little occasion when a gendarme is called to arrest *Berlioz* as he is standing in *Harriet Smithson's* coach pestering her with his attentions. The comic policeman fusses up, uncertain of the situation, and, until hasty explanations are made, tries hard to arrest the venerable and moth-eaten coachman who has been sitting with his back to the whole affair. Now this fragment of farce is as utterly and completely French as if it had been directed by Clair (before 1940) from a comedy by Labiche... But, admittedly, it is by no means in tune with the general key of the film, or rather with what the general key should be. At moments the correct mood is approached;

but broadly, as has been said by most of the critics already, this account of *Berlioz* has been turned into the sort of thing Hollywood does when called on to outline the life of a composer. Starvation in a garret—the influence of two women, one good, one bad—the great work written at top speed by the sweating genius—success when he has been "purified by suffering"—oceans of self-sacrifice—all-round forgiveness at the end, with the comrade of the hero's youth peeping benevolently through the curtains.

And yet in spite of the cheap and irritating conventionalities, the piece offers several rewards to the indulgent spectator. JEAN-LOUIS BARRAULT as *Berlioz* himself is as good as he could be with the material; and as in almost any French film, there is a good deal of first-rate pictorial design. R. M.



J.H.D.

[The Harvey Girls]

PIONEERS IN THE OUTPOSTS OF ENDEAVOUR

pompous way) for something more intellectually nourishing. *The Harvey Girls* contains no vitamins, but it has a pleasant taste.

To *Symphonie Fantastique* (Director: CHRISTIAN-JAQUE) one goes with rather

but broadly, as has been said by most of the critics already, this account of *Berlioz* has been turned into the sort of thing Hollywood does when called on to outline the life of a composer. Starvation in a garret—the influence of two women, one good, one bad—



J.H.DOWD

[Symphonie Fantastique]

THE MUSE TAKES OVER

Berlioz JEAN-LOUIS BARRAULT



"Sorry, sir, daren't risk it—never know when there may be an inspector 'anging around."

Time

I THINK I cannot do better than start with a few words on the public's attitude to the now firmly-established rule that it must treat Time as the fourth dimension—and like it. The funny thing is that the public does quite like it; I mean funny considering that time, to the public, is anything from what goes on inside a clock to a mental tape-measure stretching hundreds of years to the left, or past, and fogged over after a very few inches—say as far as next Christmas—to the right. (There is, I believe, a section of the public which sees Time as a vertical tape-measure, with the past at the top or bottom, but after all, these people are no odder than the people who prefer cats to dogs, and probably seem quite all right to themselves.) Perhaps the appeal of the four-dimensional assessment of Time is that people who have just been reading it up in a simple form can sound so awfully intelligent to those who have lost their grip on it. I think that is all I want to say on the purely mathematical side of the subject. The poetic, or mellow, aspect has been very fully dealt with by easily remembered quotations, so I shall do no more than tell my readers how they feel when they come across an old diary—cross that they wrote it so small with such a blunt pencil, but all the more interested.

Time may be divided roughly into the past, present and future; I say roughly because in everyday life there is some rather fuzzy thinking about where the divisions occur. Theoretically, as we all know, anything that has already happened is in the past, and anything that hasn't happened yet is in the future. Thus, theoretically, the present does

not exist, or not to notice. This is the sort of thing Underground travellers enjoy brooding over while they take in the toffee advertisements opposite, but as a framework for practical living, in a world which is always telling itself that there is no time like the present, it will not do. So human nature clears a breathing-space round itself and calls this the present. The boundary between past and present is not easy to define, human nature being inclined, for example, to classify a three-months-old unanswered letter as the present and a day-old newspaper as the past; but it is fairly safe to say that an event we were or were not looking forward to gets into the past remarkably quickly, while non-events like meals and work go on tagging along in the present almost indefinitely. The future is not very clearly marked off either, but if I say that it may be anything from a date for which we don't know the day of the week to a party we haven't yet started worrying over not having time to change our clothes for, my readers will see that I know pretty well what sort of people they are. Some of course are better at identifying dates as days of the week than others. Psychologists say that they may have the fun of bringing a date nearer by calling it Tuesday fortnight, but that they miss something too, for not many people think they will be any cleverer or better-looking by any date as near as Tuesday fortnight. In justice I must say that most people do not really believe they will be better-looking in the future; it is simply that they may find themselves automatically imagining it. Psychologists, in their blunt fashion, call this a hangover from our youth, when there was a fifty-fifty chance of it happening, but human nature likes to think of it as a phase it was sensible enough to grow out of, especially now it is better-looking.

All this has been a bit philosophical; now I shall come to something more practical, some consideration of the units which make up what we call time. What we call time is made up of hours, each hour being divided into minutes and each minute into seconds. As no one knows quite how long a second is no one can judge a minute, except rather over-confidently if challenged; the smallest known unit of time is therefore the time it takes to boil an egg, I mean to boil the sort boiled for three minutes. This unit has been assessed by egg-boilers as just too long to stand watching the egg for and just too short to finish doing anything else during, so that they have not really got it taped at all. The next time-unit of any importance is five minutes, or the time people who are not nearly ready to go out say they will be before they are ready. Strangely enough, people in a hurry to get ready have an acute sense of time and are the first to realize the five minutes are up; they don't even need to look at a clock, because they know it would depress them. Most of such people are ready in fifteen minutes, so we can fix fifteen minutes as our next unit and define it pretty definitely as the time it takes people to finish getting ready in a hurry as long as nothing awful happens. Going on up the scale, the next unit is half an hour, this being what Londoners think they can do any journey across any part of London in, I mean any journey of any size, involving a bus or Underground ride. If it takes, say, fifty minutes, they can tell themselves (that is, get ready to tell the people the other end) that they had bad luck with the buses; if it takes twenty they will remember next time to allow only ten. Next we get a whole hour, which can be a lunch-hour, and therefore extremely short, or the time we have to wait for a dinner that won't cook, when it is almost as long as time can be. Cooking is so closely bound up with a time that I must mention a few of the better-known instances. Everyone knows that if you worry about a



"In another two minutes I shall have spent exactly six months in queues."

kettle boiling it takes longer to boil, but possibly not everyone realizes that this is why the kettles in other people's houses boil so fast. Potatoes have a close association with time, much closer than some people think. In theory, that is if asked, most people would give potatoes twenty minutes to boil; but in practice many people rely on the traditional good nature of boiled potatoes, expecting them to become boiled just when it suits the boiler to remember them. In marked contrast are treacle puddings, which will sit quietly under their cloths for as many hours as anyone will let them, and come out much better than anyone had expected.

As a contrast and a nice ending, I shall make some poetic statements about the times of day, which tradition divides into morning, afternoon and evening. The morning is a well-marked period beginning when it gets light and ending with lunch, whatever time we have it; the afternoon ends fairly definitely at tea-time, but some people like to include the hour or so after, just to annoy the more accurately-minded who are thinking of it as the evening. The evening and night get a bit muddled, and depend sometimes on how dark it is, but the night will have established itself as such by bed-time. Going back to tea-time, people used to get very excited when they found the days had drawn out enough for them to have their tea by daylight, but double summer-time, or single, or whichever it was, has rather taken the edge off it recently, and sociologists say that public interest has switched to the first daylight dinner. And finally, talking of summer-time, I must

mention two interesting facts which psychologists have noted for a number of years: first that public opinion of the public has never been better illustrated than by the way the papers and the wireless nag us about when to put our clocks back or on; and next that the public has never put its clocks on without reflecting that this is the one day in the year when it can't afford to lose an hour, or back without feeling that one extra hour does not, on this one day in the year, help all that much.

Reunion

HOW long ago it seems since you and I
Travelled the road together day by day,
Sharing the freshness of the morning sky,
The low sun's rays aslant the new-mown hay.

Suddenly war was born, and need was great
For such as you—sturdy and swift and strong—
And you were proud to serve, and I to wait,
And trudge the weary roads without your song.

Now once again I hear your cheery humming
And haste to greet you through the country lane.
My faithful bus, how welcome is your coming,
Now that you're back on Route 14 again!

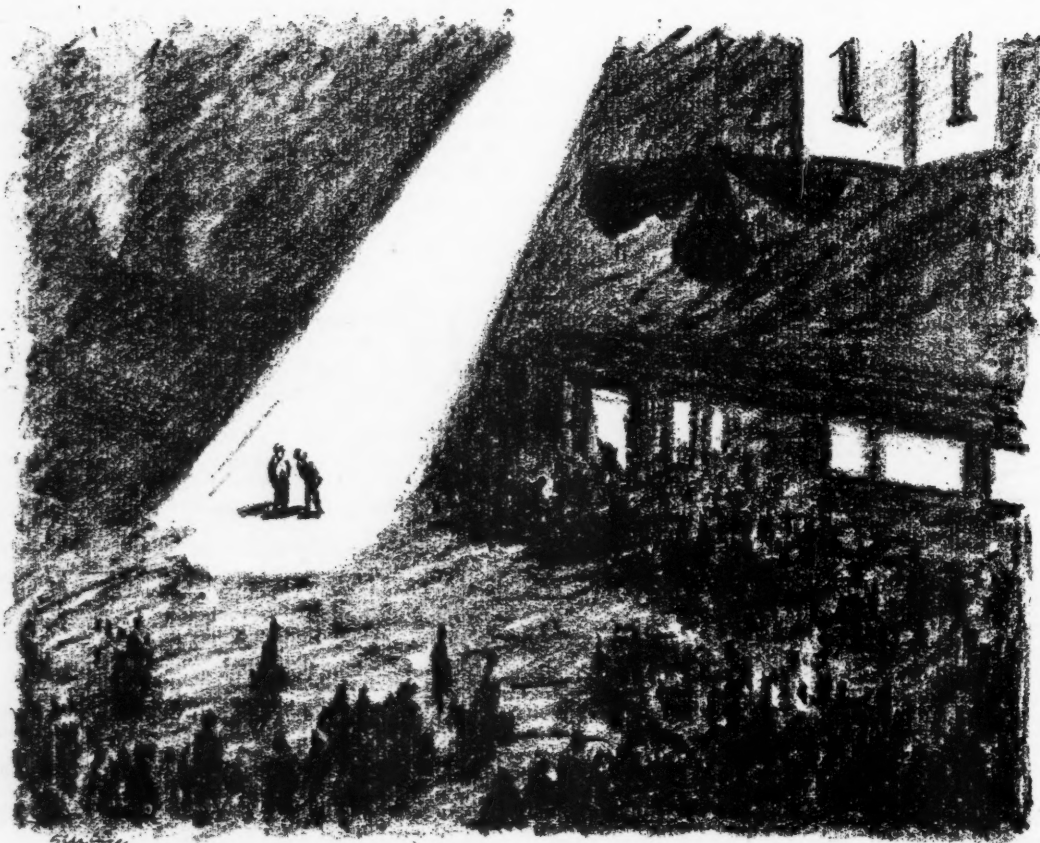
"After this the Countess, fighting against a heavy headwind, attacked by vigorous forward rushes, and the New Zealanders had great difficulty in stemming them."

Report in Sunday paper of Kiwis v. Somerset-Gloucester match.

Any chance of a photograph in *The Tatler*?



"And underneath, duckie, there's certain to be a particularly lousy little tip."



"The 8.30 to the north of England waiting on Platform 1 is driven by Driver B. Smith, whose inimitable style will be familiar to many travellers. He will be ably assisted by Fireman Thomas Hackett."

Ballade of Exasperatingly Rude Health

A THOUSAND ailments normally infest
The fragile clay that wraps my gentle
sprite:

Too loudly tuneful is the bardic breast,
The eyes are sunken and the cheek is white;
Yet now, when smitten by the general blight
My fellow ushers have retired from view,
I only thrive, as whom no bug will bite.
I might have known I shouldn't get the flu.

O sweet disorder, portion of the blest!
O lovely bed, and hearth for ever bright!
O practised fingers tapping at the chest!
O tender nurse! O steaming drinks at
night!

In vain I donned in the harsh gods' despite
The sodden vesture and the leaky shoe,

And braved unbonneted the blizzard's height;
I might have known I shouldn't get the flu.

Alone, unfriended, while my colleagues rest,
In all their steads I wage the arduous fight;
I teach a Science Huxley had not guessed,
A Spanish Prose no Don could ever write.
What recompense my labours may requite?
What years repair the damage that I do?

When all is known my sack will be in sight.
I might have known I shouldn't get the flu.

Envoi

Arise, good Head, how sick soe'er your plight;
I cannot cope with your rebellious crew.
To-day they set the Common-Room alight.
I might have known I shouldn't get the flu. M. H. L.



THE SECURITY ARK

"Are the bears aboard?"

Impressions of Parliament

Business Done

Monday, March 18th.—House of Commons: Hors d'Œuvres.

Tuesday, March 19th.—House of Commons: Nature Note.

Wednesday, March 20th.—House of Commons: Fun With the Sun.

Thursday, March 21st.—House of Commons: Exit the N.F.S.

Monday, March 18th.—Quite often, on Mondays when exciting business is down for debate in the House of Commons, the Government Whips wear a worried air. For the trains from Scotland are apt to delay the arrival in London of stalwart supporters of the Government, and Members from other parts of the country do not seem to hurry to work on the first day of the Parliamentary week.

But to-day, when the Bill of Fare was, to put it politely, less tempting than usual, the benches were crowded. Members streamed into the chamber as soon as the doors were open, and swooped to their seats with an eagerness that set the denizens of the Press Gallery wondering what was in store for them.

Ministers stepped briskly into their places, bundles of papers under their arms. Mr. Speaker called the Questions. And Members and Ministers jumped up alternately to "do their stuff."

There was no apparent reason for the intense atmosphere—certainly none in the business fixed for the day, which had to do with the future of the Straits Settlements. But Members were clearly determined to have their ration of excitement, and some of the Government's supporters grasped eagerly at that ever-exciting topic, political affairs in Greece.

Mr. HECTOR MCNEIL, Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, having said he was sorry but it was not possible to meet the latest demand of the Left that the general election in Greece be put off for an unspecified period, Mr. KONNI ZILLIACUS whizzed into the fray.

His view was that, if the general election were held soon, and it resulted in the restoration of the Greek Monarchy, this would in turn result in civil war, for which (he said) a large part of world opinion would blame Britain.

There were shocked cries of "Shame!" and "Withdraw!" from all parts of the House, but Mr. ZILLIACUS, looking fiercely at the protesters, retorted that it was *not* a shame and he would *not* withdraw.

It was Mr. ERNEST THURTLÉ, outspoken member of the same Party, who administered the *coup de disgrace* by demanding of the Minister: "Do you accept Mr. ZILLIACUS as the mouthpiece of world opinion?"

The roar of laughter was so loud that even the alert Mr. ZILLIACUS was unable to think of a retort in time.

Of course Mr. RUPERT DE LA BÈRE was in action. Mr. TOM WILLIAMS, the Minister of Agriculture, was saying, politely: "If you will draw my attention to specific instances of the matter

the Minister, Mr. WOODBURN, spoke of "toughs" and "racketeers." The Government, said he, stoutly, was out to protect the country against these gentry. From his somewhat despairing description of the cars to be offered for sale—"purchasers must make arrangements for them to be towed"—it did not seem that they would be of any great value to the more desperate type of motor-bandit. However, in spite of such discouragements, it seemed that many thousands of people wanted Government surplus goods, including watches, which were to be offered for sale in due course.

A moving little debate on the situation in Germany wound up the day. Mr. MICHAEL FOOT, burning with sincerity and indignation, wanted some of Britain's food store sent to Germany to prevent the starvation of thousands. It was, said he, small consolation to Germans saved from totalitarianism to find that all the British had to offer was free speech and democracy—and 500 calories a day.

Mr. J. B. HYND, the Minister in charge of German Affairs, replied that we were allowing 1,000 calories a day—a dangerously low level, but the best that could be done in a hungry world.

Tuesday, March 19th.—Mr. HUGH DALTON, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, continued the interesting series of nature notes with which Members of the House have been regaled recently. He announced, to the manifest astonishment of the crowded benches, that he had "yet to discover a *male* typist in a Government office."

Members discussed this statement as excitedly as people used to debate the question about dead donkeys, and scores of them hurried out to continue the discussion in the smoking-rooms. Mr. WESTWOOD, the Scottish Secretary, who was due to talk about housing, looked resignedly at the departing hordes before beginning his oration.

Question-time was full of strange bits of information. Mr. WILL GLENVIL HALL, the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, for instance, had this to offer: The cost per thousand for perforating Road Fund licences (as in the good old days) was—4½d. When Members had recovered from their amusement, they asked whether it was not time this boon was restored, but were gravely assured that, in these days, it would cost as much as—5½d. But, much more important, as there were some 8,000,000 licences issued each year, the work would use up a lot of man-hours. After that, of course, there was no more to be said.

Mr. BURKE, the Assistant-P.M.G.,



IN A JUGULAR VEIN

"It is a disgraceful measure and we shall cut its ugly throat when once again we come to office."—Mr. Brendan Bracken on the Control of Investments Bill.

of complaint, I will look into them—" when Mr. DE LA BÈRE, with a courtly bow, interposed: "Certainly—I will spend the rest of the day doing so!"

Mr. ATTLEE, the Prime Minister, announced that soon after Easter he and Members of the Cabinet planned to begin a series of conferences with British Commonwealth Prime Ministers who, through pressure of business in their own countries, could not all come to London at once.

Then the discussion on the Straits Settlements was polished off and the House passed on to other excitements. The disposal of surplus Government goods (about the tardiness of which Mr. HERBERT BUTCHER complained) led to quite a tough exchange, in which



"And all that fuss about a few burnt cakes, that will be forgotten in a week's time."

announced that the B.B.C. were to put out 1½ hours' daily broadcast in Russian as a means of letting the Russian people hear directly the British point of view on things in general. Most of the House cheered this plan, which (as Mr. ERNEST THURTELL put it) righted a "thoroughly one-sided situation," because the Soviet Government has for long had a service in English.

Mr. W. J. BROWN caused something of a sensation in an anything-but-foppish House by appearing in a sports jacket, with very baggy flannels, a flowing blue tie, a voluminous coloured collar, and brown sports shoes. But then, Mr. BROWN is an Independent.

Sir THOMAS MOORE, whose witty ingenuity often amuses the House, scored the laugh of the week. His case was this: We exported to the United States last year 2,168,809 proof gallons of whisky. We got for this some £3,900,000. But, because we sent the spirit abroad and did not consume it at home, we lost £17,000,000 in duty. So why not keep the spirit at home, consume it here, and buy dollars with the £17,000,000?

The experts scratched their heads, failed to see the obvious flaw, gave up and joined in the laughter. But it was clear that, so far as the

Government is concerned, the answer is in the negative. Sir THOMAS looked sad.

Wednesday, March 20th.—It was such a lovely day, with the sun shining brightly, that Members assembled in an almost gay manner. They sat watching the rays playing merrily on the floor and walls of the Chamber, when, suddenly, a sinister figure appeared on the roof outside the most brightly-illuminated window—and covered it with an opaque blind. Immediately the sunshine went out of the lives of honourable Members.

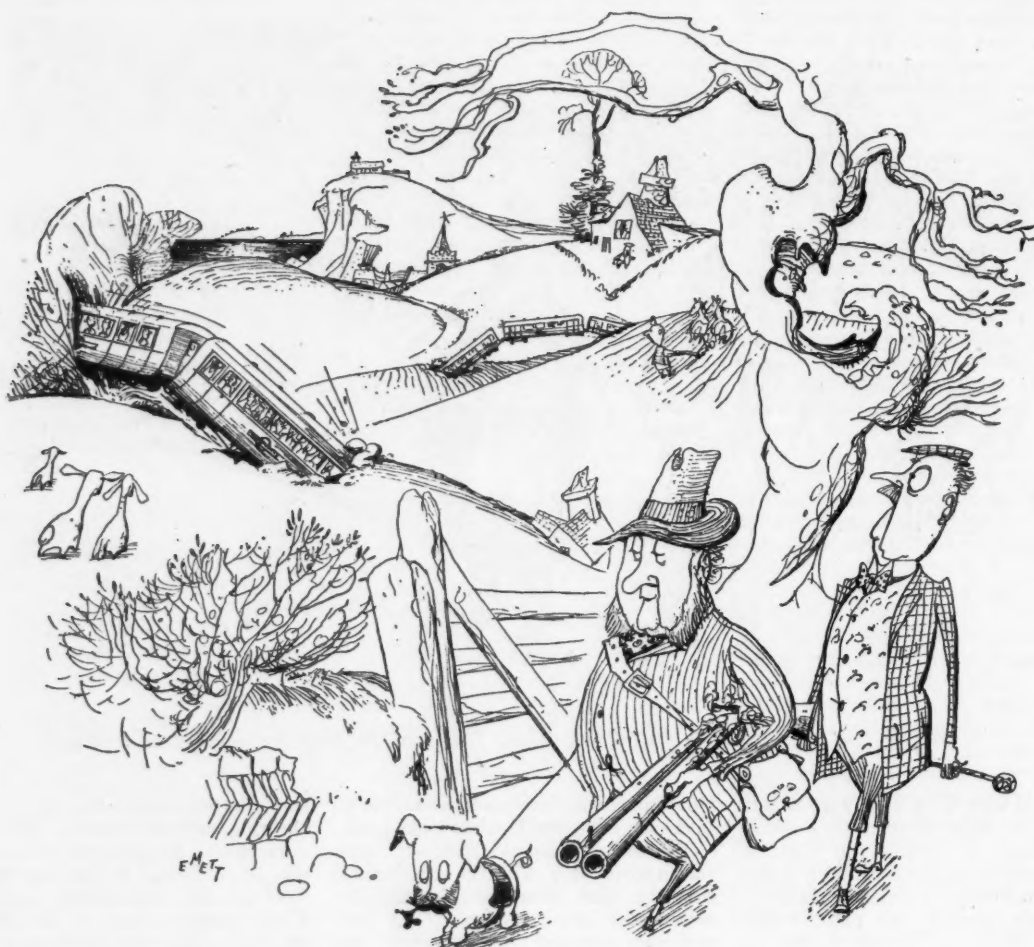
Mr. ANTHONY EDEN, sitting in the place of Leader of the Opposition, leaped up with a pathetic plea to the Speaker against the black-out being imposed "on the first day of spring"—he was a day in front of events. Mr. Speaker gently explained that the sun's rays had been shining in the eyes of the Opposition Members—but added that the wrong window had been obscured. That was that—for the moment. But the workmen of the Houses of Parliament work swiftly, and in a few moments all the windows were blacked out. While the House rocked with laughter in the new gloom, a hand appeared at the window first blacked out and with a majestic sweep removed the blind. So the sun

shone in once more, Mr. EDEN led the cheering, and all was calm and bright.

Explosive Mr. RUPERT DE LA BÈRE was so overcome by all this that he rose up and, addressing petite Dr. EDITH SUMMERSKILL, of the Ministry of Food, drew attention to his own particular courtesy to her sex. Dr. S., blushing, replied that Mr. DE LA B.'s suggestions in a question were excellent and that she was only too sorry she was unable to meet them.

The House became serious when Mr. ERNEST BEVIN, the Foreign Secretary, announced that the Polish troops under British command were to be disbanded. He added a glowing tribute to their part in the Allied victory—a tribute loudly cheered by the Conservatives but (strangely) received in cold silence by the Left Wingers. He hoped as many as possible of the Poles would go back to their native land, but promised not to let down those who felt they were unable to do so.

Thursday, March 21st.—Mr. CHURCHILL, the Home Secretary, announced the approaching end of the National Fire Service, whose heroic work in the blitz forms a gilded page of Britain's history. The end, that is, in its war-time form. But there will be greater co-ordination than in pre-war days.



"Ah, yes—chap from London was TELLING me the Underground was pushin' further afield."

Topsy Turvy

XXIII

TRIX darling, quite honestly do you feel that *parts* of this missive look less unreadable than sometimes, because my dear I'm using my magical new pen, which is *such* rapture *British* made and even now I do not utterly believe it, you know what torment a fountain-pen can be, all those *sordid* little pumps and bottles, either there is a *total* drought or *floods* of ink in all your quarters, whereas with this my dear there's no nib only a *ball-bearing* they say though *why*, and no ink-work whatever, it merely *flows* out supernaturally for weeks and weeks, and by the way no *blotting*

paper because it dries the same *second*, my dear it's *wonder-work*, so that in these days when there's *snow* in the drawing-room one can *huddle* in a chair over the embers if any and write untrammelled, *how* many I's, by the normal nonsense, and by the way the whole thing is pretty Heaven-sent because of Haddock's experiments in *smoking* blotting-paper in case no Loan, he's now trying a mixture of *shredded* blotch and pencil-shavings with a little *chopped* bayleaf boiled in onionwater, as a *result* of which, at least I say, he's having long-term *tusk-trouble* besides the most *enigmatic*

swelling on the jaw where there were no tusks extant, because of course poor sweet the survivors are *too* few and could be counted on *one* hand, and a *half* perhaps, and from what one gathers the dentist would gaily eliminate the *lot*, because there's no doubt they have a congenital *contempt* for *Nature's* teeth, and I should say *Too* right, *what* an inept and *sadistic* arrangement, however H. rather hankers for his *scanty* native gnawers because of the *pipe*, besides which it seems he has a concrete *jaw* from which it's *too* impossible to excavate the fangs without *explosives* especially

if the tusk disintegrates, once my dear during the late conflict he had one hour and a quarter under a local what-is-it, with the tuskman, who my dear is a *top-wizard*, *drilling* away quite down to H's chin and the anodyne running out at intervals and finally Haddock opens his eyes and sees him advancing with a hammer and chisel, which of course one's heard about but never guessed could happen to anyone one *knew*, well in spite of heroic efforts by the fangman not to mention Haddock an absolute chunk of masonry had to be left behind after all, so you can understand we're not fanatically keen on further excavations even with gas, because of course one's too likely to wake up with a shattered jaw or a circular saw in the mouth, then of course in these days the staff-work is so interminable because of attaching the new tooth to the denture which means hunting for old dentures among all the chaos of the blitzes, I have found his tops in a nail-box in the dug-out but the bottoms still defy discovery, talking of extractions there's warming news have you seen the suffering Russians they say are positively *quitting* Bornholm 5,000 of them and of course we're too sure its *primely* the Haddock Liberate Bornholm Movement, Haddock of course says it's high time Uncle Joe came to London because my dear there he sits like a great spider in the heart of his web thinking every fly that comes near it is a wasp, whereas in London he'd have a fabulous welcome in spite of all, and if only he could see all the shelters coming down the old suspicions perhaps might be abated somewhat, though what he'd think of the Licensing laws, as for the atomic what-not Haddock says it's infantile for him to brood and hanker for that, because after all if the suffering Russians are to have it why not quite everyone, and if everyone then everyone is equal and what is the worth of Russia's Security Belt, then of course I must say one is beginning to faintly weary of our beloved Greeks who seem to be quite incapable of adult behaviour and have got political liver-disease, but Haddock says they've been just the same about ever since the Trojan War poor sweets, altogether the Continent becomes increasingly redundant, and why Haddock says do we not get any Hock, because what is Germany for, and personally I think it's too right for France to have the Rhine and we to have the wine, because it's quite manifest we shall get nothing else, my dear if it had been the suffering Russians we should have had all the Hun-wine ab initio, however,

meanwhile Haddock's theatricals are trundling along, yesterday they had a reading of the dramma to the entire company, too gruesome because my dear there's been a perfect plague of tusk-trouble, the leading lady was quite speechless after having an *infracted wisdom fang* excavated in hospital, the composer had lost two fangs and could merely mumble, whereas as a rule he sings all the songs like an angel and plays electricly, the musical director had two out likewise and still having fang-pangs, Haddock was minus one merely but it seems the new denture has a malignant trick of from time to time nipping the largest chunks out of the upper lip, so in the middle of love-scenes he gives the loudest yelps, and of course he never was the world's ace-reader, though one does not dare to hint it, however all went wellish, but my dear how any man can so much as contemplate starting a musical play, the protracted torment, and when you think there's a special tax on it, my dear a normal dramma is agony enough when you have one bit of scenery seven actors no band and ordinary clothes, but a musical, my dear first of all the composer and the word-monger yapping round the piano for quite months about quavers, though I must say Haddock and V. have never had a carbohic word, in fact they will sing their favourites over and over again, my dear no-one thinks about an author's wife who by the first night has been hearing the new tunes for centuries, well then it all has to be orchestrated, my dear millions of little notes, and paper practically unobtainable, meanwhile the pathetic manager, my dear you must meet my seraphic Mr. Figg who is the nation's pet, is scouring the by-ways for tenors of the right shape and everything, not to mention sopranos who are not too circular, and of course the moment he's engaged anyone all the keys have to be altered, and everything one gathers has to be orchestrated again, at any rate the musical men go about with set lips and unfraternal mutters, then of course the chorus have to be amassed from somewhere which means a campaign of debilitating auditions like I told you about, and when an authentic lovely is discovered she's either got quite nothing in the skull or sings like a beetle or has been lassoed by the films, too discouraging, meanwhile the scenery they find it's too impossible to change from the law-court scene to the palace scene under about half an hour, so the word-merchant has to write a shattering new scene about nothing special with none of the top-actors who will

all be changing, Oh and of course the dresses, scores of bodies to be measured and fitted for three or four outfits, how they get the material I can not envisage, then my dear as a rule all the principals want to wear voluptuous evening dresses in the prison scene and crossing the Alps, and there are the most incendiary altercations, though praises be not so far, and when at last rehearsals begin they all have lethal colds or several teeth out and crawl about in scarves and shawls poor sweets, husking a few words tuberculously now and then, and it's too dubious if any of them will be audible on the night, though as a rule they emerge heroically, all this of course assuming that the martyred manager has got a theatre, which to-day my dear is like looking for a silk stocking, it now appears that someone has already written a play with the same name, fire breaks out in the scenery place and most of the Palace scene is a cinder, the L.C.C. say that the new curtains are too inflammable and the censor wants to cut out the entire point of the dramma, then the band arrives which is about the one enjoyable moment only all the keys have to be altered again, so chaos, rehearsals rage, the play is three hours too long, the comic man gets laryngitis and I remember once at the last minute the soprano was stung by a wasp all over her nose, at this point the complete tribe and outfit have to be transported to Manchester, and as a rule war is declared or a General Strike about the second night, this time he thinks there'll be no coal for lights and they'll have to use torches, altogether he says a Treasury man ought to be attached to the management from first to last and after the last Dress Rehearsal the martyred manager should say to him, My dear Sir do you really think there ought to be a special tax on all this agony, however somehow or other the bizarre institution does seem to survive, farewell your philosophical Topsy.

A. P. H.

"He rested his chin on his left elbow, and his right hand, with a gold ring on the fourth finger, drummed incessantly on the edge of the desk."—Yorks. paper.

A natural nervous reaction.

"Rejuvenate your stained leather chairs by rubbing them with a mixture of glue and sawdust. When dry it will harden, and the holes will hardly be noticeable."

North-Country paper.

At least, there will be distractions.

At the Play

MISS RUTH DRAPER (APOLLO)

A SEASON of only three weeks (twelve matinees in all) by Miss DRAPER is something which should be looked into by the R.S.P.C.P., the last letter standing for the poor, thwarted, slush-ridden, theatre-loving Public. Three months would be far too little. To see her again is a very heartening treat.

She retains *Opening a Bazaar* and *Three Women and Mr. Clifford*, two gems which can never be diminished by repetition. Of her new material the most dramatic is *Vive La France, 1940*, in which a peasant sees her husband off from a Breton beach to join de Gaulle. It is night, and while the woman waits she talks quietly with her mother about how her father went away against the same enemy. Then comes the farewell, brief and poignant, the woman steadying herself by running over once more the things her husband has stowed in his boat. Her mother urges her to go down with him to the water's edge, but she holds back for fear of adding to his danger. A moment later he is gone, and as she walks brokenly away she hears aircraft approaching. She stops and listens, and when she realizes they are British bombers on their way out her mood changes instantly to wild enthusiasm; and as the curtain falls she is screaming a raucous, passionate welcome. The whole episode is very simple and very moving, exquisitely done, much of it necessarily in whispers. When it is over one cannot believe that the husband and the mother have only been creatures of Miss DRAPER's magic.

In *Doctors and Diets*, another revival, she is an American hypochondriac taking three women-friends to lunch in a smart restaurant. Each of them is on a diet as imbecile as her own, and fuelled by a fearsome assemblage of parboiled roots the guests are entertained to a survey of the current mishaps of eminent intestines. Their hostess scarcely stops for breath as she exposes with liberal hospitality the

secrets of every consulting-room in town. Yet she is convinced her guests have done the talking. This is Miss DRAPER at her funniest and most mordant. Do we not all harbour some such lady-reluctantly among our friends?

Least successful is *The Return*, a study in community kindness. It shows how the postmistress of an English village rallies her neighbours in the lightning preparation of a cottage for the return of a soldier and his family, and it fails not so much because its mechanics are unconvinc-

novel to survive episodic treatment in the theatre. Of this further adaptation one can only say that it is a case of unjustifiable murder. The book may have been found shocking, but its taste was impeccable; here the wanderings of the Lausanne schoolgirl in search of love assume a tediousness and vulgarity which nothing can alleviate or excuse. Before falling victim herself to the evening's futility Miss FRANCES DAY demonstrated her ability to put over a more intelligent interpretation of Mr. LAVER's idea. Mr. JOSEPH CARL's sets come best out of this unhappy imbroglio.

"THE LADY FROM THE SEA" (ARTS)

G. B. S. said the situation in this IBSSEN play would seem natural enough to an audience of Norwegians where an English audience might boggle at it. Well, this was an English audience, and I for one found the going hard and the heroine in sore need of a medicinal slap. Having married a doctor inland, she is haunted by a longing for the sea; not just for a good physical splash in it but for some unspecified brine-bath of the soul. A sailor with whom she had earlier formed a mystic tie drops in and announces he has come to take her away. She is terrified but fascinated. The poor doctor, driven silly by these goings-on, generously releases her from her marriage; at which the scales fall from her eyes, she sends the sailor packing and embraces the doctor with a new fervour. The lessons

are evident, but I cannot see them as effective (English) theatre. Perhaps the right approach would be to treat *Ellida* as a problem in psychiatry. Miss VERONICA TURLEIGH had our sympathy in a most perplexing part, but I felt she played it on a note too uniformly dreary-fey. Mr. MARK DIGNAM struggled manfully with the rather fossilized doctor, and as his younger daughter Miss JULIA LANG gave a very promising study in high-powered naivety. ERIC.

o o

"Liability means being good at lying."
Schoolboy's definition.

No, no. That's an *asset*.



FINISHING SCHOOL. MISS INNOCENCE SEES
THE WORLD.

Evangeline Edwards MISS FRANCES DAY

ing as that, for once in a way, Miss DRAPER has slipped up on an accent. Her postmistress shows signs of being good, semi-educated, rural South-country—than which there is no more baffling dialect—but she takes Miss DRAPER all over the place, from the feudal English of *Opening a Bazaar* to unrelieved cockney. The rougher tones of Yorkshire or Devonshire would surely have been less elusive.

"EVANGELINE" (CAMBRIDGE)

I remember protesting, when Mr. JAMES LAVER's *Nymph Errant* was put on the stage before the war, that his heroine's adventures were essentially a literary conceit and that it was impossible for the delicate spirit of the

Potato on the Line

"HERE's your potato, sir!" cried the porter.

It was *not* my potato. I had merely stooped to peer thoughtfully at it from the platform edge, speculating on how it came to be down there between the rails. Things like that intrigue me. An enormous lumpy potato—on the line. The porter jumped down, retrieved it, and thrust the thing upon me. Before I could protest he had gone.

I don't know if you have ever stood on a busy platform with a potato in one hand—a big potato, unwrapped, like an orb at a coronation. People stare at you. You can't throw it away without risking a summons for wasting food. If you go into the waiting-room to hide it under a seat you find people there too. Nasty suspicious people. In the end you decide to take it home, as I did. Don't do this. Be firm and rid yourself of it at once; it is the only way.

As I was showing my season at the barrier I spotted Smythe ploughing through the crowd towards me. Smythe is a man to be shunned at all costs when you are travelling with a big potato in hand. He is absolutely certain to greet you with "Alas, poor Yprick!"—he is that sort of pest. He will lie awake for weeks thinking up new quips. He was exempt from military service during the war owing to being a fully-trained cretin.

I darted through the station precincts, shoving the potato under my coat. Then I noticed a policeman watching me. It struck me suddenly that the potato was not mine at all, in a strictly legal sense. Here was the promise of an extremely awkward situation. I didn't like it at all. Nor did the policeman. Our eyes met.

It is only when you have Done Wrong that you realize what ghastly eyes policemen have. They must train them for it. I broke into a shambling trot. I knew, without looking round, that my policeman was hot on the trail. I could feel his eyes focused on the back of my neck, on the bare part above the collar.

As I turned a corner I glanced back. He was gaining on me. Panic-stricken, I raced along the street and turned a second corner before he reached the first. A woman flung herself sobbing into a telephone kiosk and dialled 999. Soon the place would be alive with police cars.

There was no time now for concealment. I drew the potato from my coat,



tucked it under my arm and sprinted like a three-quarter for a touch-down. I dodged swiftly left and right. I raced along a narrow passage. I heard trains as I came out at a bridge. I was back at my station. There was no sign of the police, but I had to act quickly.

Why didn't I cast the potato away sooner and have done with it? There was a very good reason, and I owe my freedom to-day to remembering it in time. *The potato was swarming with my finger-prints!*

At the bridge, therefore, I halted and held the potato in a handkerchief. Then, drawing my penknife, I peeled it

with rapid, deft strokes. I heaved it naked over the bridge parapet.

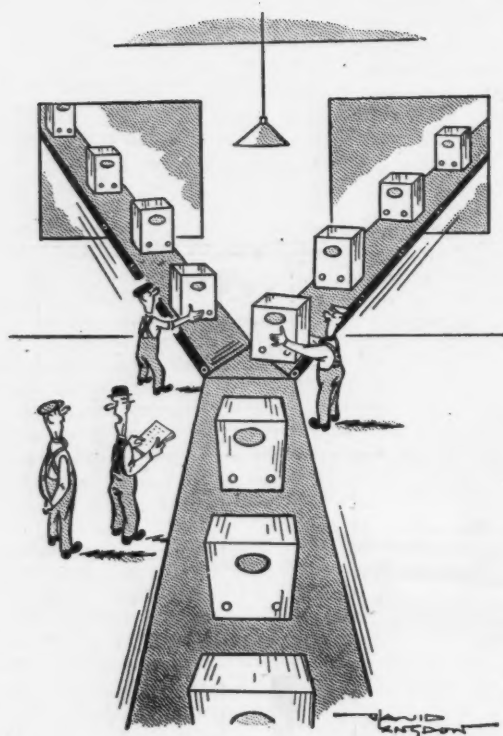
There were still the peelings, but their disposal was a simple matter. I put them in an envelope and posted them to the Ministry of Food, marked "Urgent." They will be quite safe there.

o o

"They had a very hard and difficult road to hoe, and he was quite certain when they set about it they would produce some very sound and good reasoned policy."

Report of speech, "S. Staffs Advertiser."

Blisters, more likely.



"It's monotonous enough my having to keep saying 'Export, home, export, home,' without you punctuating it with boos and cheers."

Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

This is London.

PLANNED as a series of lectures for an unpropitious 1939, Mr. JOHN SUMMERSON's *Georgian London* (PLEIADES BOOKS, 21/-) has preserved a pleasing integrity in its parts and an engaging lucidity throughout. It sets out to chronicle the rise and fall (and enumerate the remains) of London's greatest and most characteristic architecture, before an age "better able to destroy than to create" sweeps what is left of it away. The story is topographical, biographical and architectural, and it could not have been more cleverly welded. Apart from public buildings—churches, bridges and so forth—the whole feat between Wren and Pugin was the work of private citizens, speculative builders, and their architects, if any. Some were dukes, some labourers, and such careers—witness that of Barbon, son of Praise-God Barebone, who started his delightful jerry-building in 1670—are rich in initiative and entertainment. Save for Nash and the Prince Regent, no one ever succeeded in imposing a plan on London. When suburbia got going, estates were parcelled out among enterprising individuals, who put up such Palladian or Gothic villas as they or their patrons fancied. These villa elevations constitute the light relief of a text studded with dignified plans. An appendix of admirable photographs is devoted to more impressive façades and interiors.

H. P. E.

A Great Whig Hostess

These letters, edited by Lord ILCHESTER, from *Elizabeth, Lady Holland, to Her Son: 1821-1845* (JOHN MURRAY, 18/-) reflect a shrewd opinionated nature, deficient in charm, but honest and, underneath her domineering manner, rather pathetic. She was devoted to her good-natured husband, and a fond mother, though her children appear to have felt that her affection could be most comfortably enjoyed at a distance. Hence an occasional suggestion of reproachfulness in these letters to her son Henry: for example—"Dear boy, how you are beloved! Had I ever such advantages in my youth, what a different and more amiable person I would have been." Her interest in the famous men who gathered round her at Holland House was mainly proprietorial, and one looks in vain in these letters for likenesses of Macaulay and Sydney Smith, of Rogers and Moore. In partial compensation there are many incidental references which give a contemporary unidealized glimpse of well-known figures. Here, for example, is Scott's financial disaster seen from the creditors' standpoint—"Walter Scott's creditors allow him £2,000 a year from his places and property . . . This is most liberal on their part." And it is surprising to learn that, in Lady Holland's opinion, the House of Commons was too aristocratic an assembly for Macaulay to expect its favour. Another interest of these letters is in the touches that revive a bygone age—Lady Holland's hope that "dear Papa will return before footpad time," and her deep concern at an income tax of sevenpence in the pound.

H. K.

Scenes from Clerical Cruising

The pleasant small beer of a successful Hellenic cruise is what the Dean of Durham serves on board the s.s. "Lucretia" during the first half of *Archdeacons Afloat* (FABER, 7/6). We meet that selfish old bore Lady Mary Culham and her sacrificed (if not self-sacrificing) companion, Miss Hillcroft, the sprightly Mrs. Wilson and the enchanting Mr. Michalis, who shares a cabin with the ineffable Mr. Blades, vulgar Mrs. Burslem with her pearls, and the astute Mr. Pycroft from Yorkshire, and many more. Our interest, however, is chiefly centred in the gentle Archdeacon of Garminster, mildly disguised by accident as the Rev. James Castleton, and the far more worldly and enterprising Archdeacon of Thorp, intentionally incognito as Mr. Craggs. The preservation of their disguises and the various alarms which threaten them seem all that we are to have at first, but, unknown to us and to the archdeacons, the plot is thickening behind the scenes and soon becomes very thick indeed with the disappearance of half a dozen of the passengers, apparently into the clutches of a gang of Greek bandits. How their knowledge of the Bible enables the two clergymen to turn the tables to a certain extent on these gentry, and how the dexterity of Archdeacon Craggs—all is fair in love and war and this was technically war—made that operation complete, the reader must find out from Dr. C. A. ALINGTON's amusing pages. No reader need fear a too religious atmosphere: the two archdeacons are on holiday and the reader shares it with them. B. E. S.

Chinese Survey

The Rev. HAROLD RATTENBURY modestly suggests that his third book on China should be approached through Mr. Cecil Beaton's excellent photographs and through the statistical charts supplied by the Isotype Institute. One fears, however, that the ordinary reader, for whom the book is intended, will find the charts both repellent and difficult. The one on "Religious Contacts between East

and West" looks more like central heating; and that on the comparative urbanization of China and Great Britain colours most of its urban population a misleading rural green. But the text-book approach wears off as you get *Face to Face with China* (HARRAP, 10/6). The author has been through most of the country's walled cities and maintains that though walls and gates are now unpopular, the most remarkable civilization came from behind them. This he describes with a commendable bias in favour of religion and food: the former as a way of life, the latter as so much more important than "comfort" that the nation is thought of as four hundred and sixty million "mouths." He is commendably fair to new developments and to a China "breathlessly catching up with modern science." But the most invigorating attitude in his book is struck by a peasant folk-song of 2500 B.C.

H. P. E.

Lady D'Abernon

There is usually a good deal of incidental interest scattered over the diaries of those who have seen war at first hand and been at the centre of political affairs, but it is very seldom that a volume composed of such extracts is readable throughout, and even more interesting as a revelation of a mind and a nature than for the light it throws on external events. *Red Cross and Berlin Embassy: 1915-1926* (JOHN MURRAY, 10/6) is such a volume. It opens with an account of Lady D'ABERNON's experiences as an anaesthetist on the French and Italian fronts from 1916 to 1918. Two pages in this section are especially memorable for their combination of sympathy and detachment, the one a comparison of the English and the Italian soldier, the other an account of the repudiation by a Frenchwoman, the matron of a field hospital, of some flowers tendered to her by a dying German soldier. In 1920 Lord D'Abernon was appointed Ambassador in Berlin, where he remained till 1926. Though on the whole not attracted to the Germans, "who always seem to belong to some stratum that advanced Western civilization has barely touched," Lady D'ABERNON pictures the leading Germans of those years at once vividly and, the reader feels, justly. The two who stand out most clearly are Stresemann, reciting Shakespeare "not unlike an inspired bull-frog," and Keyserling talking at the speed of an express train; but for general descriptive power the author's superb account of Fürstenstein and its inmates must come first.

H. K.

Portrait of a Young Man

Richard Luscombe, who is introduced to us in the first few pages of *The Price was High* (HODDER AND STOUGHTON, 8/6) as a stock-jobber's clerk at thirty shillings a week, is treated as a hero and behaves like one. In no time at all, so it seems, he is taken up by a retired naval officer who owns a ketch and needs a sailing companion. He rises on the Stock Exchange and in society, leads a life-about-town, becomes engaged to the lovely daughter of an earl, who says, rather surprisingly, that his future son-in-law need not worry about income. Before his marriage he had joined the Navy as a rating. His creator, Commander GILBERT HACKFORTH-JONES, continues to lavish gifts on the young man during his war-time career. He wins a decoration, becomes a submarine officer, and behaves gallantly all through; yet somehow he fails to come to life or to hold our affection. At the end so many things are wrested from him and in so ruthless a manner that one wonders if the author himself has become a little tired of his paragon. The book makes interesting reading because

the conditions of Luscombe's life are exciting, and because Commander HACKFORTH-JONES writes well of the Stock Exchange and the Submarine Service and shows how magnificently young men from many streets have risen to their naval occasions.

B. E. B.

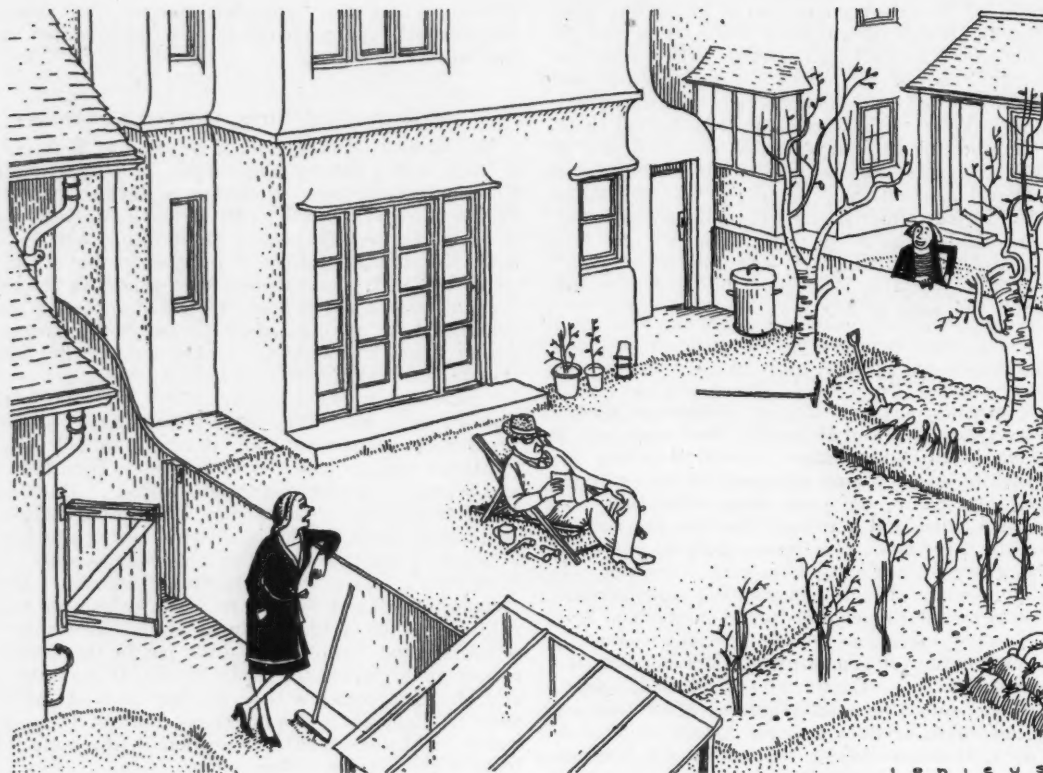
Mrs. Bowling Buys Another Newspaper.

MR. DONALD HENDERSON, if he felt like it, could write a fairly stiff letter on the subject of plagiarism to Mr. DONALD HENDERSON, so similar in theme is *Goodbye to Murder* (CONSTABLE, 8/6) to *Mr. Bowling Buys a Newspaper*. (I have only seen the play of Mr. Bowling, but the author made the adaptation himself and presumably stuck to his own script.) It seems curious that successive stories from the same pen should be about a chain of motiveless murders committed by an uncriminal person with exceptionally strong wrists whom misery makes temporarily unstable; that the method in both should be smothering, in one case by hand and in the other by pillow; and that both Mr. Bowling and Mrs. Winterton should have carried out experiments along these lines at school, should both want to attract capture, and should in the end both fall in love and because of it wish their crimes undone. But whatever Mr. HENDERSON's reasons may have been, laziness was not among them, for he is a fertile writer and has been prodigal of good ideas in this absorbing account of Mrs. Winterton's lapses from Christian tolerance. After an unhappy childhood she has made an unhappier marriage with a monster of vanity, an ineffective dilettante whose selfishness and complacency drive her to the backhanded revenge of disgracing the family name. It is an able novel, and Mr. HENDERSON's triumph that each of the killings when it happens seems the most natural thing in the world. But the slaughter is incidental, the main interest lying in character and atmosphere.

E. O. D. K.



"I will say this for the Japs—they DID draw the British fire."



"... and I said to her, I said ..."

The Central Character Mystery

ANOTHER thing I have learned about writing is that biography, autobiography and fictional biography are really only highbrow forms of detective fiction. I have known for a long time of course that some people will not buy or borrow a Western thriller unless it is camouflaged as Travel (North America) and will only read squalid novelettes if they are called Social Documentaries; but I never properly understood the appeal of biography until I read half a dozen volumes in a row.

In *Tobias Greenwood* I spotted the central character quite early on—somewhere near page 175—and that must stand as my best performance. Mind you, I was rather lucky. But for that foolish slip where he called Tobias's great-grandfather Tobias S. Greenwood the author would have fooled me to this day.

The book began conventionally: "That year the sheep-dog trials at Harkley were well attended. The men of the fells jogged down into the valley and packed every inn in the village. Most of the younger shepherds, 'Higginson's Men,' found lodgings and good cheer with Mistress Ifley of the Bell and Harness, and it was thither that young Tobias Greenwood repaired in search of sanctuary for his girl-wife Ottima. Nine hostesses out of ten would have slammed the door in the faces of the young couple, but in Mistress Ifley the wells of human kindness were deep and crystal-clear. Without a moment's hesitation she hurled two drunken ostlers from the little room over the vaults and put up chintz curtains for Ottima.

"And so it was that Tobias Greenwood was ushered into the nineteenth century barely three hours before the

first whistle for the Crummock Cup. He had his father's eyes ..."

Two more Tobias Greenwoods were born in the next thirty pages, one in Hampshire and the other in the Lincoln to Bewdley stage-coach.

At chapter fifteen it seemed to me that the Hampshire Tobias was my man. I was not yet in a position to sort out the various generations, but from the way the author handled him—the minute examination of his finances and the careful delineation of his features—I certainly thought the Hants lad well worth watching. But, no, it soon became clear that he was merely the great-grandfather of another Tobias Greenwood.

At this point in my reading I turned to the fly-leaf and jotted down the facts as far as I knew them.

Tobias Greenwood of Hants was a great-grandfather.

Tobias Greenwood, husband of Ottima, was the father of Tobias Greenwood of Harkley.

Tobias Greenwood of Lincoln-Bewdley was dead.

Tobias Greenwood of Harkley had disappeared since the opening pages.

Tobias Greenwood and Tobias Greenwood, both apparently of no fixed abode, were beginning to appear quite frequently in the narrative.

Now that I had whittled down the candidates to a short list of three I felt much more confident. And the more I thought about Tobias of Harkley the more certain I became that he too could be eliminated. He seemed too obvious altogether; no writer of biographical fact or fiction could allow suspicion to fall upon a character mentioned in the very first paragraph. And then I thought again. Such an ingenuous move *might* be devised to put me off the scent! I have known such tactics work: right at the end of the biography the writer produces what seems to be an entirely new central character and then calmly draws the attention of his distracted readers to the fact that the newcomer made his bow in chapter one. Clearly I had to look out for a come-back from Tobias of Harkley.

It was shortly after the resumption that I spotted that "S." between Tobias and Greenwood. For a time I sat quite still as the jig-saw pieces moved like puppets in my mind. Then I felt a swift overwhelming rush of pleasure as the artistry of the genealogical pattern became apparent. Tobias S. Greenwood was of course the Tobias Greenwood of Lincoln-Bewdley, great-grandfather of Tobias of Harkley and great-great-grandfather of the younger Tobias of no fixed abode. This meant that the Tobias of the title was the son of Tobias of Harkley. I was only a generation out with my first guess.

The other thirty or so pages seemed a dreadful anti-climax. Hod.

Lupton's Watch

LUPTON is one of those fellows who believe in keeping their watches fast. He likes to think that he is always those few minutes in hand.

He does not have to worry about setting his watch to keep it fast. It gains a regular five minutes a day. When he first bought the watch he was delighted. On the second day he was ten whole minutes in hand. He said it was amazing what a feeling of

leisure it gave him. After twelve days he was one hour to the good. I do not know what he did with this hour, but he seemed to find it a great comfort to have it by him.

When thirty-six days had passed he was arriving at his office just as his watch was telling him it was time to go out to lunch. He didn't go out to lunch of course. He didn't do that until the watch thought it was time to knock off for a cup of tea.

When Lupton had had his watch a hundred and twenty days he would be catching his train to the city when, according to his watch, he should have been catching his train home again. And Lupton was very gratified indeed.

"I do like to have plenty of time in hand," he said.

Maliciously I sowed the seeds of doubt in his mind.

"But your watch isn't ten hours fast," I told him.

"It is!" he insisted anxiously. "Look—the clock up there says eight-fifteen, and my watch says six-fifteen!"

"You're not ten hours fast," I repeated. "You're two hours slow."

"But I *can't* be," he objected. "The watch doesn't lose—it gains. How can it be slow?"

"If it says six-fifteen when it's really eight-fifteen, obviously it's slow."

Lupton thought unhappily for a moment. Then he brightened.

"But my watch doesn't mean six-fifteen to-night!" he cried. "It means six-fifteen to-morrow morning!"

"You need to carry a calendar as well as a watch," I told him. "But never mind. Twenty-four days more and you'll be dead right."

The day came. I encountered Lupton at one-fifty-seven, and his watch said one-fifty-seven. Lupton was quite worried.

"I don't like it—I don't like it at all," he said. "Of course I know it really means one-fifty-seven in the morning, but it's misleading. I wonder whether I ought to put it on just five minutes?"

I dissuaded him. I pointed out he had quite enough on his mind already, having to remember exactly how many days had elapsed since he had purchased the watch when he wanted to know the time, without going out of his way to invent a day and stick it in.

When the watch had been in his possession two hundred and eighty-eight days it synchronized once more with the real time. But Lupton was now a whole day to the good, and he was a happy man when I met him for lunch.

"Is this to-morrow's lunch you're

eating?" I asked. "If so, what's happened to to-day's lunch? Some-time in the past two hundred and eighty-eight days you've had either one lunch too many or one lunch too few. Which is it?"

Lupton couldn't decide which it was. However, four days later the watch broke down under the strain of keeping ahead of time, and it had to be repaired. It was away from Lupton exactly six weeks.

So now Lupton will have to keep that watch going for thirty-two years, sixteen weeks and four days before he has caught up and can start getting time in hand again.

These figures are inclusive of leap years, and allow for the one day and twenty minutes he had saved up when the watch stopped.

He is, as I have indicated, very fond of this watch. But he is now keeping it running at home in his desk, and has bought another watch for use during the forthcoming thirty-two years, sixteen weeks and four days. At the end of that period he intends to use the original watch again, but meanwhile, he claims, the mental arithmetic involved is too much for him.

o o

The Mouse

I FIRST saw him one evening while I was having a late supper of soup and Disraeli. Years ago an uncle left me the six-volume edition of Monypenny and Buckle's *Disraeli*, and as I have often dallied with the idea of becoming Prime Minister myself when I get a little more leisure, I have been steadily wading through it, though oddly enough the only time I feel in the mood for Disraeli is when I am eating or drinking tinned soup (I offer the choice of verbs because vegetable is mostly eating and tomato purely drinking) late at night. This I do in the kitchen of my flat, and last night I was just helping Disraeli purchase the Suez Canal when I looked round to locate a pea that had dropped from my spoon and saw that it had fallen on the floor, where a very small mouse was playing football with it.

If anybody had asked me whether I was frightened of mice or not I should have given a manly laugh and said was it likely that a man who had shot lion (or rather *at* lion) would be frightened of a mouse? But of course lions do not stroll into the kitchen in the middle of the night and start playing football with peas.

On seeing the mouse I rose hastily

to my feet, my knees lifting the table approximately two inches and covering with vegetable soup a letter from Queen Victoria and some rather acid remarks by Gladstone. At this my fear turned to rage and I picked up my folding book-rest (a very clever contraption of the sort that should be provided in all restaurants now that the large old-fashioned cruet has gone out) and hurled it at the mouse, who muttered what sounded like a sneering laugh and dashed away.

I am not easily beaten, so I filled a small bowl with water, covered it with a sheet of manuscript (on which was written the carbon copy of an abortive letter to *The Times* with a very clever joke about the Lion and the Unicorn), and then balanced half my weekly cheese ration carefully in the middle of the paper. I retired to bed and found in the morning that though the cheese had sunk to the bottom the mouse was not with it.

Since then he has appeared every night at the same time, to watch me eat my supper. He does not approach very closely, and I think it can hardly be possible that he also wishes to peruse Monypenny and Buckle. Even supposing the likelihood of a mouse

with literary leanings, he could, if he insisted on Monypenny and Buckle, quite easily start with Volume I on the shelf in the other room, when neither of us would disturb the other.

On the second evening I controlled myself and pretended not to notice him for a moment. Then, very quietly, I dropped a pea just by my foot. He scuttled towards it, and I seized a heavy poker which I had in readiness and brought it down with tremendous force, missing the mouse by a mere couple of inches and hitting the large chilblain on my big toe. After scraping soup from a rather stormy interview with Bismarck I retired to bed feeling that the mouse had won Round II.

On the third evening I had to change my tactics. Even the greatest generals are dependent on the weapons at their disposal, and Field-Marshal Montgomery, for instance, would not have been able to throw tanks at the enemy unless he had some tanks in stock. I was in an exactly parallel position. No peas. The last tin of vegetable soup had gone, and I had been obliged to fall back on tomato. I determined to make the great sacrifice, and when the mouse appeared on the third evening,

with a quick jerk of the wrist I deluged him with soup. Apart from a few spots that made the Irish Situation even more obscure than it had been previously, the mouse got it all, and retreated. I retired to bed hungry, but feeling rather like Wellington must have felt after Waterloo. If I knew anything about mice, I thought, I had seen the last of him.

Apparently I do not know anything about mice. He was back again the next night, chirpy as ever, but wearing what appeared to be a red fox-fur coat instead of his usual chinchilla.

Since then I have decided simply to ignore him. Sooner or later, however thick-skinned he may be, it will no doubt dawn on him that he is *de trop*.

Misfire

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And LIVINGstone replied
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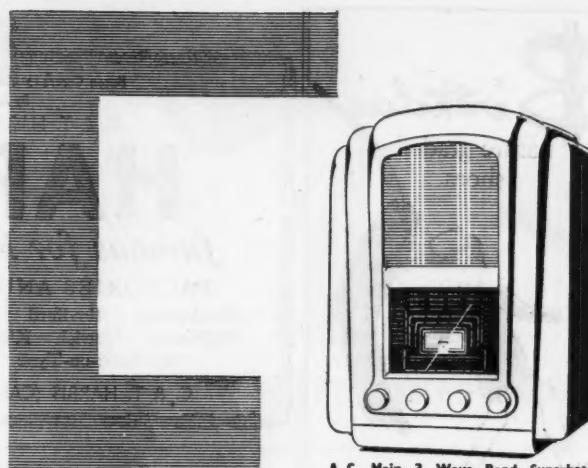
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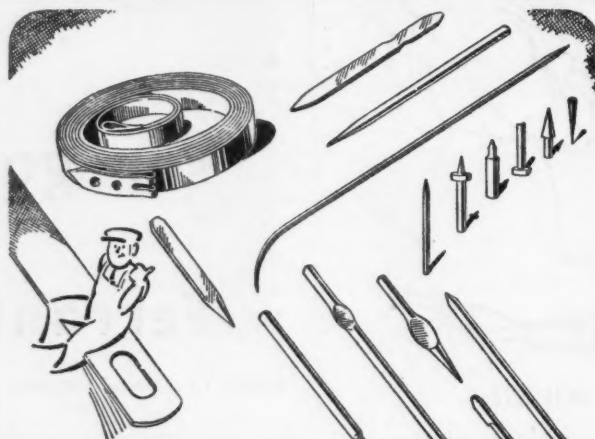
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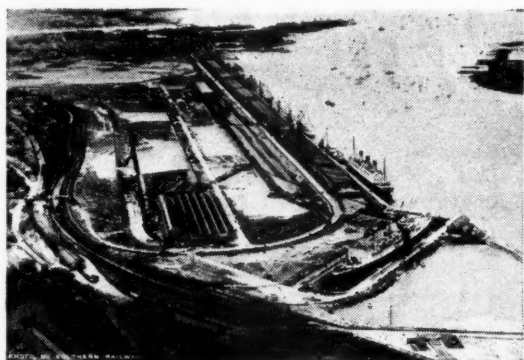
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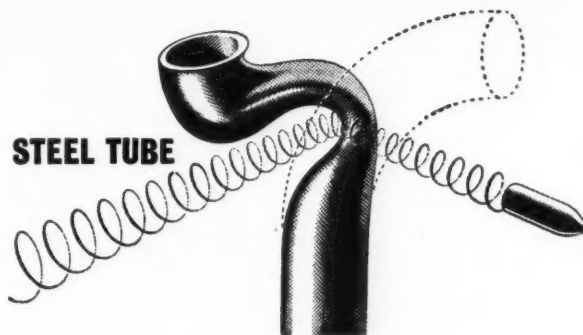
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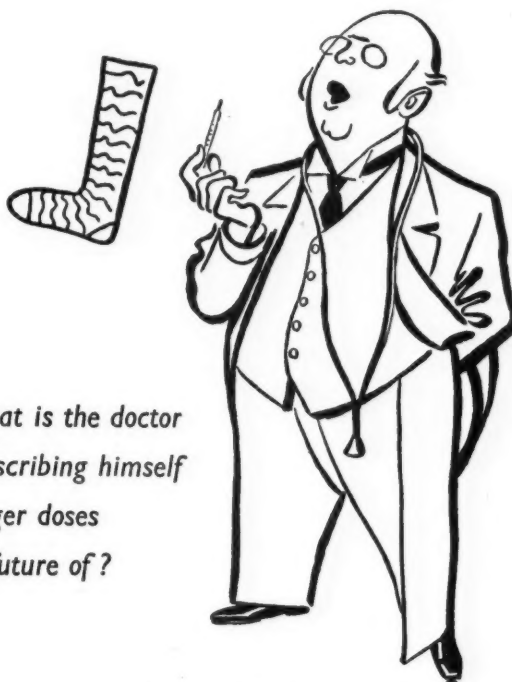
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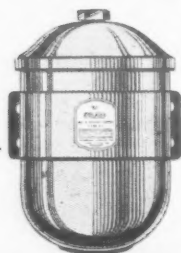
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